

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

/059 W

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R 210430Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2900

INFO COMUSSAG NKP THAILAND

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMIPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 1902

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PINT, VS

SUBJECT: SAPPERS ATTACK BRIDGES IN BINH DUONG

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION AMEMBASSY SAIGON FROM AMCONSUL BIEN HOA
20 FEB 75 BEING REPEATED FOR YOUR INFORMATION

QUOTE BIEN HOA 108

1. DURING THE PAST 48 HOURS THREE BRIDGES, TWO OF SOME IMPORTANCE, WERE BLOWN BY NVA SAPPERS IN BINH DUONG PROVINCE. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OF THE THREE, THE BINH NHAM BRIDGE ON OLD QL 13 IN LAI THIEU, IS EXPECTED TO BE OPERATING AGAIN BY FEB 22. THE BEN NAY BRIDGE ON TL 15 LEADING TO PHU HOA DONG VILLAGE WAS SEVERELY DAMAGED AND LOCAL OFFICIALS DO NOT BELIEVE FUNDS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR ITS REPAIR FOR SOME TIME. THE THIRD, A FOOT BRIDGE OVER A CANAL IN LAI THIEU NEAR OLD QL 13 (THE CAU NGANG BRIDGE), IS OF LITTLE MILITARY IMPORTANCE.

2. ON FEB 20 AT 0100 A SAPPER FORCE ATTACKED THE BINH NHAM BRIDGE (XT 854074) AND DESTROYED 15 METERS OF ITS 40 METER LENGTH. ONE PF SOLDIER WAS KILLED AND ANOTHER WOUNDED IN THE EXPLOSION. THE BINH DUONG PROVINCE CHIEF EXPECTS TO HAVE TEMPORARY BRIDGING
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OVER THE SPAN WITHIN 72 HOURS.

3. ON

FEB 19 AT 0240 THE BEN NAY BRIDGE (XT 712176) SPANNING THE TONG THE CREEK ON THE ACCESS ROAD TO PHU HOA DONG - TL 15 - WAS ALSO DESTROYED BY SAPPERS. OUR BINH DUONG PROV REP ESTIMATES THAT 80 PERCENT OF THE 30 METER BRIDGE WAS DAMAGED. THE BINH DUONG PROVINCE CHIEF BELIEVES THAT SOME TIME MIGHT PASS BEFORE FUNDS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR REPAIR OF THE BRIDGE. A RANGER COMPANY WAS INSERTED INTO PHU HOA DONG VILLAGE FOLLOWING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BRIDGE. DESPITE THIS REINFORCEMENT TO GUARD PHU HOA DONG, VILLAGERS FEAR A MAJOR NVA ATTACK AND MANY ARE FLEEING THE AREA FOR FEAR OF BEING CUT OFF.

4. ON FEB 20 AT 0045 HOURS THE CAU NGANG FOOTBRIDGE WAS DESTROYED BY COMMUNIST SAPPERS. POLICE REPORT THAT THE EXPLOSION TOOK PLACE AS PSDF GUARDS WERE BEING CHANGED. AT LEAST TWO SAPPERS WERE KIA AT THE SITE OF THE EXPLOSION. A LARGE FOOTBRIDGE SPANNING A CANAL WHICH RUNS PARALLEL TO OLD QL 13, THIS BRIDGE IS IMPORTANT ONLY TO LAI THIEU FRUIT FARMERS LIVING ON THE WEST BANK OF THE SAIGON RIVER AND TO SAIGON RESIDENTS, TOURISTS WHO FLOCK TO LAI THIEU FOR OUTINGS ON WEEKENDS. ITS DESTRUCTION, HOWEVER, IN A DENSELY POPULATED AND HERETOFORE PLACID AREA IS EXPECTED TO HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE MORALE OF LAI THIEU RESIDENTS AND TERRITORIAL FORCES. SIGNED PETERS
END QUOTE MARTIN

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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